

Outlook for Travel to Britain

- The US trade is cautiously optimistic about the start of 2010, with the majority expecting recovery.

Britain in the News

- The proposed 12 day strike by British Airways cabin crew over the Christmas period received considerable media attention in the US.
- London is included in a list of the ten best value destinations in the world to visit in the coming year in a book recently published. Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2010 claims to capture the world's hottest travel trends, destinations, journeys and experiences for the year ahead, bringing together the expertise of Lonely Planet authors, staff and travellers.
- CMI's 14th Annual Gay & Lesbian Tourism Study has named England as the most visited European destination for LGTB travellers last year. England was placed ahead of France, Germany and Italy.

General Market Mood

- The US unemployment rate fell in November to 10% from 10.2% in October, Labor Department figures show. Employers in November cut the lowest number of jobs since the recession began in December 2007.
- US GDP in the third quarter rose at an annualised rate of 3.5%, the largest increase since the fourth quarter of 2004.

Consumer Behaviour

- The number of Americans with passports continued to rise (11.9m) and renewal passports were issued in FY 2009 (which ended 30 September), according to the State Department. That increased the total passport-holding population in the U.S. to 94.5 million, a record 33% of the U.S population.
- This year saw the Forbes 400 wealthiest fall in collective net worth for only the fifth time since 1982. Over the last 12 months their wealth has dropped from \$1.57 to \$1.27 trillion, the ten richest Americans losing a combined \$39.2bn, a 14% decline.
- The percentage of American travellers who consider themselves 'environmentally conscious' has not changed since 2007 (78%), according to a study commissioned by the US Travel Association. However, there has been a remarkable increase in the percentage who report familiarity with the term 'carbon footprint' (from 12% in July 2007 to 54% in July 2009).

Media Matters

- National Geographic Adventure will cease operations, a victim of the down economy and systemic changes in publishing. The final issue is December/January, the Best of Adventure.
- Americans are spending more time watching television, as well as playing on computers and chatting on social networking sites. Nielsen reported that U.S. television viewing reached an all time high during the 2008-09 season, with Americans spending an average four hours and 49 minutes a day in front of the television.

Routes and Fares

- Daily flights between Manchester and New York are to be resumed by Delta Air Lines for next summer. The service to JFK will be relaunched on 2 May 2010 following a temporary winter suspension from 7 January.
- US Airways is to suspend flights to Gatwick and Birmingham as part of cost-cutting measures. The two services, from Philadelphia, are among five European routes to be axed.
- American Airlines has announced it will add a new service between Manchester and New York JFK. The new non-stop daily summer seasonal service is scheduled to start on 16 May until 30 September 2010.

Business Tourism

- A survey of members by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives underscores the caution prevalent in the business travel industry. Only a quarter of respondents said they will spend more on corporate travel next year, while about half will operate at 2009 levels.
- Most people are not cancelling events because of H1N1 (swine) flu, according to a new survey from the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE). Only 9% are holding off on meetings and conferences because of it while 91% are not.

Leisure Travel Trade

- Results from VisitBritain's latest US 'How's Business' survey showed that the trade is split about expectations for the October to December period. The same amount expect US-UK business in Quarter 3 2009 will be 'above/well' above 2008 levels as 'below/well' below. However, the survey has tracked a notable upturn in optimism over the course of the year.
- In addition, it is clear the economic downturn remains the major issue affecting US-UK travel. Over half of respondents reported the downturn as having a 'very' negative impact. In contrast, a notable number reported it as having a 'somewhat' positive impact.

Competitor Activity

- Tourism New Zealand says its tourism marketing spend in the North American market will be more than doubled in 2010. TNZ wants to stop a downward trend in the long-haul visitor market in recent years. The US market accounts for nearly 200,000 visits to New Zealand a year.
- The Mexico Tourism Board's recovery campaign to stimulate travel is moving to its next stage, a 'call to action' highlighting the aggressive pricing by resorts and tour operators for the winter season. The campaign is said to be worth \$85m overall.
- Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions and Expedia have teamed up to launch an online US marketing campaign aimed at stimulating short-term travel to Holland.

VisitBritain Activity Update

- VisitBritain recently announced a tagline contest for the upcoming Gay and Lesbian campaign which will launch in 2010.
- VisitBritain and Virgin Atlantic Airways 'Get More Britain for Your Buck' campaign concluded with impressive results.

Upcoming Activity

- The latest phase of the Gay and Lesbian campaign will launch in early February targeting US consumers. The campaign will feature the winning tagline in marketing messaging and will promote Britain's proud Gay history, LGBT destinations, as well as value messaging.

- VisitBritain will work in cooperation with England's North Country and VisitEngland to launch a campaign targeting the Baby Boomer audience focusing on generating immediate bookings for vacations in ENC and England.
- VisitBritain has partnered with British Airways to develop a joint campaign to launch in March. The campaign will target a broad 25-65 year old audience in the US and Canada and focus on generating bookings of flights and packages to the UK.

Who's in Town?

- Sherlock Holmes, the highly anticipated new movie starring Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law has received considerable media focus in anticipation of its US opening on the 25 December. Warner Brothers are reportedly hoping that it will become a lucrative franchise.
- The debut album by Scottish Singer Susan Boyle looks set to become one of the top sellers of 2009 in the USA. After opening at number 1 with 700,000 copies sold, it is predicted by industry analysts to be the top selling album of the year.
- British actors featured prominently in the nominations for the 2010 Golden Globes, to be awarded in January. Carey Mulligan, Helen Mirren, Emily Blunt, Colin Firth and Daniel Day-Lewis were British stars that all received nominations.